

# Saint Dositheus



*A young soldier  
learns to become  
a monk*

Venière



**DOROTHEUS OF GAZA**

**LIFE OF DOSITHEUS**

TRANSLATED INTO BASIC ENGLISH

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## CONTENTS

Introduction .....	4
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### THE LIFE OF DOSITHEUS

The monastery of Abba Seridos.....	7
Dorotheus is made responsible for the infirmary.....	8
Dorotheus meets Dositheus.....	8

Dositheus' story.....	9
Dositheus has a vision.....	10
Dositheus changes his life.....	11
Dositheus is received into the monastery.....	12
Dositheus learns to eat less.....	13
Dositheus does something wrong and is sorry.....	15

Dositheus learns to become a good monk:.....	16
- The story of the beds.....	16
- The story of the clothes.....	17
- The story of the knife.....	18
Dositheus is ill:.....	19
- The story of the eggs.....	19
- Dositheus learns to pray without stopping.....	21
- The good word of the Elder.....	22
The Brothers are not happy.....	23
Why this praise from the Elder?.....	24
God makes known the glory of Dositheus.....	27

Word List.....	30
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Words in this list are marked in the text with an asterisk (\*).

## INTRODUCTION

### THE HISTORY OF THE MONKS

The first monks \* came into existence in Egypt at the end of the third century or at the beginning of the fourth century.

#### Who were the first monks?

Paul the Hermit \* (228-342) lived in solitude \* and did not have any disciples \*.

Anthony (251-356) was called the Father of Monks. He lived by himself in the desert \* at first. Then a number of disciples came to group themselves around him.

We have the story of his life, written by Athanasius of Alexandria (295-373).

Pachomius (292-346) was called the Father of Cenobites.\* He set down how monks should live together and wrote the first monastic rules \* for them.

#### The monks in the desert of Gaza

The region of Gaza is in the south of Palestine and quite near Egypt. From the fourth century, monks were living in the desert there with the help of Hilarion.

Hilarion was by birth from this area of Gaza. About the year 307, he went to Egypt near to where Anthony was living, to be formed by him in the monastic life. \*



After this, he went back to the desert of Gaza to take up this way of life.

Quite a large number of men followed his example, so many monasteries \* were built there.

### **The monastery of Abba Seridos**

By the fifth century, there were now a great number of monasteries. The best known was that of Abba Seridos. It was to the south of Gaza, some kilometres from the town. Seridos had founded it at the end of the fifth century and he was its first superior, or abba \*.

There the monks lived together, but monks who had progressed far on the way of God were able to live in greater solitude\*. They were called 'hesychasts' \*.

Some others lived completely by themselves. Among them, two very holy monks had made the monastery of Abba Seridos well known.

They were Barsanuphius and John the Prophet, who were called The Two Elders \*.

They did not leave their cells \* at all, but by their letters they played a great part in teaching the younger monks. They did not write their letters themselves. They spoke the words to Abba Seridos and he wrote them down. It was he who gave the letters to those who were to receive them.

We still have 840 of these letters. Among them, about a hundred are to a monk called Dorotheus.

### **WHO WAS DOROTHEUS?**

Dorotheus was born into a Christian family at Antioch in Syria at the beginning of the sixth century. He had a good education. Then he desired to follow the example of the Apostles and give up everything for love of the Lord.

So he entered \* the monastery \* of Abba Seridos. There he put his whole trust in Barsanuphius and John the Prophet.

One day, Abba Seridos made him responsible for the formation of an outstanding young novice \* called — Dositheus.

### **THIS BOOK TELLS THE WHOLE STORY OF DOSITHEUS**

About the year 540, Dorotheus in his turn founded a monastery \* and was its abba. \*

We still have 17 Instructions which he gave to his monks, 16 Letters and 188 Sentences. <sup>1)</sup>

Dorotheus did not write the Life of Dositheus himself, but he was able to give the necessary details to the one who put it in writing. This record was made from a number of little stories which only Dorotheus could have given to him.

So we can say that this Life is the work of Dorotheus.

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1) Instructions : teachings

Sentences : short statements giving wise teaching



## THE LIFE OF DOSITHEUS

### THE MONASTERY OF ABBA SERIDOS

1 . Everyone knew the greatly respected Dorotheus of Gaza.  
 When he came to the monastery \* of Abba Seridos  
 to become a monk,  
 he found many ascetics \* there.  
 Some did not live with the community. \*  
 They lived completely by themselves  
 in order to have greater knowledge of the peace of God.  
 Among these ascetics, two Elders \* stood out:  
 Barsanuphius, a very holy man, and Abba John.  
 Abba John obeyed Barsanuphius in everything.  
 He was very holy like him.  
 To John had been given the gift of seeing what God desired.  
 This is why he was called John the Prophet.

Dorotheus put all his trust in the two Elders.  
 He spoke to Barsanuphius  
 by means of the friend of God, Seridos.  
 One day, Abba Seridos judged him worthy  
 to serve Abba John the Prophet.

## **DOROTHEUS IS MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INFIRMARY**

When the Brothers of the monastery were ill,  
they suffered much because no one had care of them.

So the two Elders made this decision:

Dorotheus shall build an infirmary \*  
and he is to be responsible for it.

So, with the help of God, Dorotheus built an infirmary  
for the sick.

His brother by blood gave him the necessary money:  
this man was a very good Christian  
and a great friend of the monks \*.

And, as I have said,  
it was Abba Dorotheus who cared for the sick.  
He was responsible for everything in the infirmary  
and he was helped by some Brothers  
who served God with their whole heart.

## **DOROTHEUS MEETS DOSITHEUS FOR THE FIRST TIME**

2 . One day, Abba Seridos sent for Dorotheus.

Dorotheus came, and at the side of the Abba  
he saw a young man in uniform.

He was a handsome young man:  
he had the look of someone important.

He had just arrived at the monastery  
with some friends of Abba Seridos.

These men belonged to the household  
of the governor of the province.

When Dorotheus came in,  
 Abba Seridos took him a little to the side to talk to him.  
 He said:

- These people brought this young man.  
 They say that he wants to stay here in the monastery.  
 But I am a little afraid:  
 he may belong to one of these important persons.  
 He may have stolen something  
 or he may have done something wrong  
 and has run away.  
 If so, we risk making enemies.  
 In fact, he does not have the look  
 and he does not have the walk  
 of someone who desires to be a monk.

### **DOSITHEUS' STORY**

3 . Young Dositheus was in the service of a General  
 and he had a life free of care.

(Such young people regularly lived a life of pleasure.)

He had never heard talk about God,  
 but one day the soldiers of the General  
 were talking in front of him about Jerusalem  
 the Holy City.

So then he wanted to see Jerusalem and he said to the General:

- Please, send me to the Holy Places. <sup>1)</sup>

The General did not want to make him unhappy.

---

1) The Holy Places: the places where Jesus lived in Palestine

One of his good friends was about to go at that time to Jerusalem.

The General said to him:

- Do something for me: take this young man with you so that he can see the Holy Places.

So the friend took Dositheus with him.

He took great care of him and treated him politely because of the General

and he made him have his meals with himself and his wife.

### **DOSITHEUS HAS A VISION \***

They all arrived at the Holy City and they all went to visit the Holy Places with great respect. They went to Gethsemane.

There, there was a painting of Hell. \*

Dositheus was surprised:

he looked at the painting carefully.

Suddenly, he saw at his side a very tall woman who had on a beautiful purple-red dress. <sup>1)</sup>

She gave him an account of each of those people in the picture who were to be handed over to punishment and she taught him about other things as well.

The young man listened: he was truly surprised and wondered at her words.

Indeed, as I have said, Dositheus had never heard about God.

---

1) This was the noble dress at that time. In the Bible, Lydia was a seller of purple (Acts 16.14).

God will judge everyone.

So he asked the woman:

- What then is it necessary for me to do  
to escape punishment and its suffering?

She replied:

- Fast. <sup>1)</sup>

Do not eat meat.

Pray all the time.

Do this, and you will not experience these sufferings.

She gave him these three commands,  
then she disappeared and he saw her no more.

## **DOSITHEUS CHANGES HIS LIFE**

From that moment,  
the heart of the young man was wounded.  
He was sorry for his faults,  
and he obeyed the three commands the lady had given him.  
He fasted and did not eat meat.  
The friend of the General saw this.  
He was worried, because of the General.  
He knew that the General loved this young man very much.

The soldiers who were with Dositheus also saw how he lived.  
They said to him:

- Young man, do you want to stay in the world?

---

1) to fast: to do without or with less food and drink, in order to train the body for prayer

If so, it is necessary not to act in this way.

If you want to live like this

go to a monastery \* and you will be saved.

But the young man knew nothing of the things of God.

A monastery? What was that? He had no idea.

He only did what the lady had commanded him to do.

Dositheus said to them:

- I do not know where to go.

Take me to this place you know.

As I have said,

among these soldiers a number were friends of Abba Seridos.

So they went to the monastery

and they took the young man with them.

## **DOSITHEUS IS RECEIVED INTO THE MONASTERY**

4 . Abba Seridos sent Dorotheus to talk to a young man.

Dorotheus questioned the young man carefully.

The young man could only say:

- I want to be saved.

So Dorotheus went back to the Abbot and said:

- Do not be afraid of taking this young man.

There is nothing bad in him.

Abba Seridos said to Dorotheus:

- Good. But I do not want him to be with the Brothers.

Do something for me. Take him with you.

So he will be saved.

Dorotheus was humble.

For a long time he was against the idea and said:



- To be responsible for another person is too great a thing for me.

The Abbot replied:

- I am responsible for you and for him.  
Why are you troubled?

Dorotheus answered:

- I will take the responsibility. Since you truly desire it, and if you think this is a good thing, talk to the great Barsanuphius about it.

Then the Abbot said to him:

- Good. I will go and talk to him about it.

So Abba Seridos went to talk it over with the Elder. \*

And Barsanuphius gave this answer for Dorotheus:

- God will use you to save this young man.  
Agree to the request to take him with you.

So Dorotheus, full of joy, took the young man and kept him near him in the infirmary.

The name of this young man was Dositheus.

## **DOSITHEUS LEARNS TO EAT LESS**

5 . Meal-time came.

Dorotheus said to Dositheus:

- Have a good meal.  
But tell me what you eat.

Dositheus came back to Dorotheus and said:

- I ate one and a half loaves.

A loaf of bread weighed almost one and a half kilos.

Dorotheus said to him:

- Dositheus, are you feeling well?

Dositheus answered:

- Yes, Father, I am feeling well.
- You are not hungry?
- No, Father, I am not hungry.
- Well, from now on, eat only the first loaf and a quarter of the other one. Then break the other quarter into two pieces. Eat one piece and leave the other.

Dositheus did this.

Dorotheus questioned him:

- Dositheus, are you hungry?

Dositheus answered:

- Yes, Father, I am feeling a little hungry.

Some days later, Dorotheus asked Dositheus again:

- How are you getting on, Dositheus?  
Do you still feel hungry?

Dositheus answered:

- No, Father. Everything is going well,  
with the help of your prayers.

Dorotheus said to him:

- Then do not take more than one and a quarter loaves.

And Dositheus did this.

Some days later, Dorotheus again said to Dositheus:

- How are you getting on now?  
Are you hungry?
- It is going well, Father.
- Then break the quarter into two pieces.

Eat one piece and leave the other.  
 Dositheus did this.  
 So, with the help of God, little by little,  
 Dositheus ate less and less.  
 At first, he was eating two kilos of bread,  
 and then he ate only a quarter of a kilo.  
 Yes, one can become accustomed to anything,  
 even with regard to food !

### **DOSITHEUS DOES SOMETHING WRONG AND IS SORRY**

6 . Young Dositheus was very able in all that he did.  
 He took care of those who were ill in the infirmary.  
 He did everything as well as possible.  
 And all were happy with the way he took care of them.  
 But Dositheus was not always patient with those who were ill.  
 Sometimes he spoke to them bad-humouredly.  
 Then he wept. He left everything and went to the store-room.  
 The other Brothers working in the infirmary  
 wanted to encourage him.  
 They went to see him, but Dositheus was still sad.  
 So the Brothers went to Abba Dorotheus:  
 - Father, please be so good as to come and see Dositheus.  
 He is weeping and we do not know why.  
 Dorotheus went to the store-room.  
 He saw the Brother, sitting on the floor, weeping.  
 Dorotheus said to him:  
 - What is the matter, Dositheus? What's wrong with you?  
 Why are you weeping?

Dositheus answered:

- Forgive me, Father.

I was angry and I have said unkind words to my brother.

- What, Dositheus, you were angry !

Are you not ashamed to let yourself become angry?  
and say unkind words to your brother?

He is Christ and it is Christ you are wounding.

Do you still not know this?

One more time: make a new start with everything  
and become better.

Dositheus took courage and chased away his sadness.

Then he went to serve the sick.

## **DOSITHEUS LEARNS HOW TO BECOME A GOOD MONK**

### **The story of the beds**

7 . Dositheus was very good at making the beds  
of those who were ill.

He had a simple heart and said freely  
any thought that came to him.

For example, here is something which happened  
from time to time:

Dositheus was making a bed with great care.

Abba Dorotheus passed by, near to him.

Dositheus saw him and said:

- Father, Father ! I am saying to myself:

‘I am good at making beds, I am !’

Dorotheus answered him:

- Oh ! Oh ! my son !

See, you are a good servant now.  
 You have become a good worker.  
 But have you become a good monk !

### **The story of the clothes**

Dorotheus never let Dositheus become attached <sup>1)</sup>  
 to what he was doing  
 nor to any thing.

Dositheus accepted everything with joy and with faith  
 and he was joyfully obedient in all things.

When he needed clothing,

Dorotheus gave him something which was not new.

Dositheus took it and mended it.

He did this well and with care.

Afterwards, Dorotheus said to him:

- Dositheus, have you mended those clothes?
- Yes, Father, I have mended them well.

Then Dorotheus said to him:

- Good. Give this to Brother So-and-so or So-and-so  
 who is ill.

And Dositheus ran to give it to him.

Then Dorotheus gave him another.

Dositheus lovingly mended it in the same way.

And Dorotheus said to him again:

- Give it to Brother So-and-so.

And Dositheus gave it to him immediately.

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1) attached: feeling attraction to a thing or a person and not wanting to let it go

He never became sad about it,  
 he never complained in his heart, saying:  
 'I am tired of mending clothes, making them look beautiful,  
 and then Abba Dorotheus takes them  
 and gives them to someone else.'

It was the opposite:  
 every time some good act came to his attention  
 he did it very quickly.

### **The story of the knife**

8 . Another time, a Brother went to the market  
 and he brought back a very good knife.  
 It was a beautiful knife.  
 Dositheus took it, and handed it to Abba Dorotheus.  
 He said:

- Brother X... got this knife and I have taken it.  
 If you agree, we will keep it in the infirmary \*  
 because it is very good for cutting the bread into small pieces.

But Abba Dorotheus did not want  
 to have beautiful things for the infirmary.  
 He wanted only solid things and nothing more.  
 So he said to Dositheus:

- Get that knife. I want to see if it is a good one.

Dositheus gave him the knife, saying:

- Yes, Father.

It is very good for slicing the bread.  
 Dorotheus also saw that it was very good for that.  
 But he did not want Dositheus



to be too much attached to anything,  
so he did not let him keep the knife.

He said to him:

- Dositheus, does this knife really please you?

Do you want to be the slave of this knife  
and not the slave of God?

It is true, Dositheus. This knife does please you.

And you see, you are attached to it.

What is your desire?

Your master is this knife. It is not God.

Are you not ashamed?

Dositheus listened. He lowered his head and said nothing.

Dorotheus voiced his disapproval for a long time.

In the end, he said to Dositheus:

- Come now ! Put the knife here and do not touch it again.

Dositheus took care not to touch the knife again.

He did not even take it up to hand it to someone.

All the Brothers used it, but only he did not go near it.

And Dositheus never said:

All the others have the right to use it and not me.

Why not?

He did with joy everything he was told.

## **DOSITHEUS IS ILL**

### **The story of the eggs**

9 . That is how Dositheus passed some years of his life  
in the monastery.

He lived there for almost five years.

He was obedient until his death.

Never, not even once, did he follow his own will..

Never did he act according to his desires.

One day he became sick and he coughed up blood.

(Indeed, he died from a lung disease.)

He heard someone say:

Eggs cooked in boiling water are good  
for those who cough up blood.

Abba Dorotheus knew this also

and he loved to look after him while he was sick.

But many troubles occupied his mind

and he did not think of the eggs.

So Dositheus said to him:

- Father, I want to tell you something.

I heard of something which might do me some good  
but my spirit is giving too much attention to this thing.

So I do not want you to give it to me.

Dorotheus answered:

- What is it, Dositheus?

What is troubling you? Tell me.

- Promise that you will not give it me.

I have told you, this thought occupies me too much.

- Good. I will do as you wish.

Then Dositheus told Abba Dorotheus:

- I heard some Brothers saying:

‘Eggs cooked in boiling water are good  
for those who spit up blood.’

But you yourself have not thought it good to give me some.

This is why, please, in the name of the Lord,  
do not take account of this thought  
and do not give me these eggs.

- You do not want them? Well, I will not give you any.  
Do not trouble yourself.

Dositheus had said:

‘The thought of eggs occupies my spirit too much’  
so to take the place of the eggs

Dorotheus did everything he could to find other things  
which would do him good.

Even when he was seriously ill,

Dositheus fought to control his own desires.

### **Dositheus prays unceasingly**

10 . Dositheus’ thoughts were always on God.

In fact, Dorotheus had taught him to pray without stopping,  
according to the custom,

‘Lord Jesus Christ, have pity on me,’ <sup>1)</sup> and from time to time:  
‘Son of God, help.’

Dositheus prayed without stopping in this way.

When he became sick, Dorotheus said to him:

- Dositheus, give thought to prayer.

Pay attention to it and do not lose it.

Dositheus answered:

- Yes, Father. Pray for me.

---

1) This is the ‘Jesus Prayer’. It is a common prayer of Eastern (Orthodox) monks \*.

A little time after, Dositheus was more seriously ill.

Dorotheus asked him again:

- So, Dositheus, what about prayer?

Are you holding on to it all the time?

He answered:

- Yes, Father, with the help of your prayers.

Time went on and Dositheus became more ill.

He had no strength and was moved about on a blanket.

Dorotheus said to him:

- And prayer, Dositheus? How is it going?

Dositheus replied:

- Forgive me, Father, I have no longer the strength to pray.

So Dorotheus said to him:

- Well, let prayer be. Keep your mind on God  
and remember that you are before him.

## **THE GOOD WORD OF THE ELDER**

Dositheus suffered much and it made him say to the Elder: \*

- Let me go. I have no more strength.

The Elder replied:

- Wait a little longer, my son. God's pity is very near.

Abba Dorotheus saw that Dositheus was suffering very much.

He was afraid. He said to himself:

'Dositheus is suffering too much.'

Again, after some days, Dositheus said to the Elder:

- Master, all my strength is gone.

Then the Elder gave him this answer:

- Go in peace. Take your place

near to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
and be our ambassador with God. <sup>1)</sup>

## **THE BROTHERS ARE NOT HAPPY**

11 . When the Brothers heard the Elder's reply to Dositheus  
they were angry and said:

- Why has the Elder given him this answer?

What has he done that is extraordinary?

The Brothers had never seen Dositheus fasting two days together  
as many of them did. <sup>2)</sup>

He never kept awake before the Office of Vigils. \*

He had only got up to say the last part of this Office.

They had never seen him do anything difficult.

It was the opposite.

Sometimes they had seen him eating a little  
of the special food for the sick  
or even a little fish-head that was left after the meal  
or something like that.

I have said before  
that in the monastery there were Brothers  
who fasted two days together.

They kept awake twice as much as the others  
and they were training themselves in asceticism. \*

When they heard the Elder's answer to this young monk,  
who had been in the monastery only five years,  
they were angry.

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1) ambassador: representative, normally of one country to another

2) see note, page 11

## **WHY THIS GOOD WORD FROM THE ELDER?**

The Brothers were not aware  
 that Dositheus had done anything special.  
 They did not know that he was obedient in all things.  
 In fact he had never followed his own will, not even once.  
 They did not know that he always obeyed without discussion.  
 Sometimes Abba Dorotheus had given him an order  
 just to try him.  
 And Dositheus had gone running to do it.  
 He obeyed without argument.  
 Here are two examples.

### **First example of obedience**

In the beginning, the young novice \*  
 still had the habit of speaking very loudly.  
 One day, Dorotheus said to him laughingly:  
   - Dositheus, you need some bread made soft in wine. <sup>1)</sup>  
   Yes, it's true: go and take some softened bread !  
 Dositheus listened to what was said:  
 he went and came back with a bowl with some wine and bread.  
 He held it out to Dorotheus to bless before he ate.  
 Dorotheus did not understand.  
 Surprised, he turned to Dositheus and said to him:  
   - What is it you want?

---

1) There was a large dog in a Roman story called Cerberus. To stop his loud barking, he was given bread softened in wine.



Dositheus replied:

- You said: Take some bread softened in wine.  
So, bless it, please.

Dorotheus said to him:

- You really are a fool !  
I said to you: 'Take some softened bread'  
because you are as noisy as a Goth. <sup>1)</sup>

(When Goths were not pleased,  
they became angry and shouted aloud.)

When Dositheus heard this, he asked Dorotheus to forgive him  
and went to put the bowl back in its place.

### **Second example**

12 . One day, Dositheus came to question Abba Dorotheus  
about a saying in the Bible.

Dositheus had a pure \* heart

and he was beginning to understand certain sayings in the Bible.

But Dorotheus did not want Dositheus  
to give his attention to that yet.

He wanted more that Dositheus would give all his attention  
to becoming more and more humble.

So when Dositheus questioned him, he replied:

- I do not know.

Dositheus gave no more thought to it.

He came back another time,

and asked Dorotheus about another saying.

---

1) In Europe, the Goths were an early tribe of warriors. They were  
rough and noisy.

So Dorotheus said to him:

- I do not know. But go and ask Abba Seridos.

And Dositheus went away without suspecting anything.

But before sending Dositheus to Abba Seridos,

Dorotheus had said to Abba Seridos:

- Dositheus may come to ask you some questions  
about a saying in the Bible.

Well, scold him a little.

Dositheus did not know this.

He came and questioned Abba Seridos.

Abba Seridos started to be angry and said to him:

- Can you not be at peace, you who know nothing?

You dare to ask these questions?

Do you forget that you have not a pure \* enough heart?

He added other words like these

and, slapping him on both cheeks,

he sent him away.

Dositheus went back to Dorotheus and showed him his cheeks.

They were red because of the slaps he had received.

He said:

- I got it, well and truly !

He did not say, 'Why did you send me to Abba Seridos?'

Why did you not punish me yourself?'

Dositheus said nothing like that.

He accepted with confidence everything Dorotheus said to him  
and he did it without argument.

When Dositheus asked Abba Dorotheus about a thought  
he accepted his reply with complete confidence,

and he kept it in mind.

So he never came again with the same thought.

## **GOD MAKES KNOWN THE GLORY OF DOSITHEUS**

13 . So, as I have said,

the Brothers did not know about all this admirable effort that Dositheus always made.

Some criticised the word of the Elder \* behind his back, the word that he gave to Dositheus when he let him depart.

But one day, God wanted to make known the glory that he had prepared for Dositheus because of his holy obedience \*.

The Lord also wanted to make known the gift which he had given Dorotheus to save others.

And that was when he was only a disciple \* of Abba Seridos.

We see that this was true

because Dorotheus led him straight to God, and very quickly.

And so, a little time after the death of the young monk, an Elder who was very holy and noted by all was at the monastery for a few days.

He had the sudden desire to see the saints who had died in that place.

He prayed to God to let him see these monks \* in a vision . \*

He saw them all together. They were standing in choir. \*

A young man was in the middle of them.

The Elder said to the Brothers:

- I have seen a young man with the Fathers. Who is he?

And he gave a description of the young man.

Then all the Brothers realised that it was Dositheus  
and they gave glory to God. They were full of praise:

- When you think of the life he had lived  
and the education he had ... !

Yet Dositheus became a friend of God, and in so little time.  
God judged him worthy of so great an honour  
on account of his obedience \*  
and for saying 'no' to his own will.





**\* ABBA**

In Aramaic, the language of Jesus, 'Abba' is the word for 'Daddy', the name a little child gives to his father. Among the early monks \*, Abba is the name given to any experienced monk, because he may be the spiritual father of the young monks, guiding them on their way to God.

Later, ABBOT is the name given in the monastery \* to the Father of all the monks who is to go at the head of his Brothers and point out to them the way to God. He acts as Christ's representative.

**\* ASCETIC**

Someone who is teaching himself in a special way to live as God wants. To make his heart and mind completely pure (empty for God), he does many things which are hard for his body. For example, he keeps vigil (keeps awake), he fasts, he prays often and for a long time. This way is called ASCESIS.

**\* CELL**

Little room where the monk prays, sleeps, reads the Word of God and works.

**\* CENOBITE**

Monk who lives with his Brothers in the monastery. \*

**\* CHOIR**

When the monks come together to pray the Divine Office, they stand or sit face to face in one or two lines.



- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| * COMMUNITY       | Group of monks * living together.  |
| * DESERT          | A waste land with little water or plants. The first monks lived in the deserts of Egypt and Palestine.<br>Also, a place where one can be by oneself with God.  |
| * DISCIPLE        | One who is learning from a master (teacher). In a monastery * a monk is the disciple of the Abbot. Sometimes he is also the disciple of a Senior.  |
| * DIVINE OFFICE   | This is the worship, or service, of God: the prayers of the Church which are said at certain hours of the day. An Office is one of these times of prayer. in monasteries *, the Office takes place seven times in the day, and once during the night - the Office of Vigils or Matins. |
| * ELDER or SENIOR | An experienced monk who has been living the monastic life * for some time and is wise in the things of the Spirit.   |
| * ENTER           | To go in; to start living in a monastery *   |
| * HELL            | This is a place of great suffering, pain, of the body and the soul. The opposite of Hell is Heaven. Those who refuse to love God and their brothers and sisters on earth are separated from God for ever after their death.  |

- \* HERMIT                      Monk who lives completely by himself, not as a cenobite. \*
  
- \* HESYCHAST                Monk, especially in the East, who has gone far on the way to God.  
He separates himself from the other monks of the monastery \* to live with God in greater quiet of soul and self-control.
  
- \* INFIRMARY                Place in the monastery \* for those who are ill.
  
- \* MONASTIC LIFE          The way the monks follow, living in their monastery.
  
- \* MONASTERY                House where a number of monks live together as brothers.
  
- \* MONK                        This word comes from the Greek word which means 'alone' (by oneself), 'one'. The monk is a person who seeks God only, in solitude or with Brothers. To serve Christ better he goes away from his family and friends. He does not take a wife, he lives poor, and he gives obedience \* to a superior \* who helps him to see what God wants for him. Women who live the monastic life are called nuns.
  
- \* NOVICE                     Monk who is starting in the monastic life.

- \* OBEDIENCE      To do what is asked, freely and for the love of God.
  
- \* PURE            To have a pure heart is to say ‘no’ to any desire or thought which is against the love of God.
  
- \* RULE            Book of the life of the monk In it, he learns the way he must follow in order to come to God. We have a number of Rules put in writing by the first monks \*. For example, those of Pachomius (292-346 AD), those of Basil (329-379) and the Rule of Benedict (490-547).
  
- \* SOLITUDE      Being by oneself, living with no one else.
  
- \* SUPERIOR      The person in control of the monastery\*, the Abbot and those who help him, the Prior and Sub-Prior.
  
- \* VIGILS          see \* DIVINE OFFICE
  
- \* VISION          The act of seeing something in the spirit. Sometimes God sends a vision to give knowledge of something which we are not able to see naturally

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